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REPORT
OF
THE GOVERNOR'S YOUTH SERVICE COMMISSION
TO
HONORABLE LUTHER HODGES, GOVERNOR OF NORTH CAROLINA

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OF
NORTH CAROLINA
1956

THE GOVERNOR'S YOUTH SERVICE COMMISSION, created by the 1955 General Assembly and appointed by Governor Luther Hodges in August of that year, has spent months in research and consideration of the area of responsibility entrusted to it. The Commission feels that North Carolina, as an enlightened state, must realize that its children are its greatest resource and its primary concern, since in them lies its hope of the future. Such concern would acknowledge the importance of assuring the children of our state a fair chance to have the right sort of homes, good nutrition, physical and mental health, the security that comes from shared affection, and an education that will train their hands, their heads and their hearts.

The last decade has seen a marked increase in the incidence of juvenile delinquency in North Carolina as well as in the rest of the nation, indicating that somewhere along the line we are not adequately meeting our social responsibility. The Commission recognizes the fact that poverty and inadequate income often lead to delinquency within a family. A specific effort, under the leadership of the Governor, is being made to raise the general economic standing of the state through the encouragement of new industries, the promotion of small business enterprises and the establishment of a minimum wage. This we know, however, is only part of the total picture. Much is already being done on other levels through the devoted efforts of professional and volunteer agencies and religious, social and civic organizations. Much more needs to be done.

With these facts in mind, the Commission submits the following recommendations:

IN THE FIELD OF PREVENTION

1. State-wide expansion of the system of testing in our public schools to include all students in order that we may know what our problems are and how best to meet the existing need.
 - a. Education, to be effective, must be geared to the child's mental and emotional capacity.
 - b. There is at present inadequate knowledge of the number of children in the various mental categories in North Carolina.
 - c. Such information, accurately and scientifically determined, might conceivably make a marked change in certain areas of the educational picture of the state.
2. Expansion of the program of instruction in the public schools for special education for handicapped children, with every effort being made to attract teachers to this field, and incentives, such as an increased salary scale, offered. The Commission recommends that the State Board of Education provide for a sufficient number of these teachers to meet the existing needs. As a means of attaining this objective the Commission further recommends that at least 25 additional teachers in this area be employed annually, and that the General Assembly appropriate adequate funds for this purpose.
 - a. It is a demonstrated fact that the mentally retarded individual can make a meaningful contribution to society when
 - (1) Adequately trained
 - (2) Suitably placed
 - b. Although we have no accurate figures, due to the lack of a state testing program the State Director of Special Education estimates that in the 174 school administrative units
 - (1) As many as 2% of the children have an I. Q. of only 50 to 70 but are considered educable.

- (2) 1.5% are physically handicapped.
- (3) Approximately 5% need help for hearing aid and speech improvement.
- c. Many children, now in regular classes, are so retarded mentally that they are unable to cope with the public school curriculum and require special instruction in order to attain maximum growth and development.
- d. Unless the Exceptional Child is taught to use his capabilities to the best advantage at the level at which he seems able to progress
 - (1) He cannot contribute to society.
 - (2) He will lose social and emotional stability if forced to tasks beyond his capacity (here lie the possibilities of delinquency).
 - (3) He will divert resources rightfully belonging to the normal child.
- 3. Expansion of the Guidance and Counseling services in all of our schools.
- 4. Wide expansion of the programs of Family Life Education offered in our Junior and Senior High Schools.
 - a. Such programs should be designed to
 - (1) Provide training, giving young people
 - (a) Better moral and ethical standards
 - (b) Better patterns of family living
 - (c) Stimulus for the development of social and emotional maturity
 - (2) Promote parallel parent-education programs in the community.
 - (3) Lead to the development of an integrated program of family life education in the schools, starting at the first grade.
 - b. The home today needs increased help in this area because the task is bigger than in the past.
 - (1) Fast pace of modern life, radio, T. V., movies, population movement - all bring youth against adult problems earlier in life.
 - (2) Few parents are adequately prepared for the job of parenthood.
 - (a) Have had little or no child guidance training.
 - (b) Don't recognize, and often are unable to cope with phases of child's emotional growth and development.
- 5. The use of the Visiting Teacher, sometimes referred to as the School Social Worker, as an integral part of our public education system. The Commission suggests that this program might be set up on the basis of one Visiting Teacher for every 2,000 children.
- 6. The enactment of laws which would place upon parents the financial and other responsibility for the delinquent acts of their children.
- 7. Legislation that would fix the responsibility upon fathers of children born of parents not married to each other (generally referred to as illegitimate children) for their financial support and care.

- a. Inasmuch as illegitimate children are wards of the state, the state should have some record of the paternity of these wards.
- b. Figures from the State Board of Health for the year 1954 show
 - (1) 8.65% of total live births were illegitimate children (ratio of approximately 1 out of every 12).
 - (2) In some counties the percentage is as high as 17% (one out of every 6).
- c. N. C. Statute of Limitations requires that action for non-support of children be instituted within 3 years after the birth of the child or within 3 years after the father has made some contribution to his support.
- d. Cases are on record where in some instances mothers with as many as 7 children by 2 or 3 different fathers are receiving no help for the support of the children from the fathers, resulting in the financial responsibility for these children being placed upon the taxpayers.

8. Enactment of legislation requiring that in divorce actions where there are children involved the Court be required to have a pre-trial investigation made of the parents and a report rendered to the Court before an order is entered as to the custody of the children.

9. More financial assistance to the State Recreation Commission in order that they can cooperate more fully with local areas in the development of programs suitable for all children.

10. Closer cooperation between the religious and educational institutions and the courts dealing with juvenile offenders.

IN THE FIELD OF CORRECTION

1. Enactment of legislation extending the Juvenile Court age in North Carolina through the seventeenth year.

- a. The children in the 16 to 18 age group are to some degree a "lost" group of children from the standpoint of state and community resources.
 - (1) Not entitled to the protective services of the juvenile courts.
 - (2) Most likely to get in trouble through idleness.
 - (a) Compulsory school attendance law permits drop-out at 16th birthday.
 - (b) Labor laws prohibit employment of children under the age of 18 in any occupation that is hazardous or detrimental to the general welfare of children.
 - (c) Without parental consent, youth cannot enlist in armed services under the age of 17.
 - (d) Courts, rather than send a child to the roads, frequently place him under suspended sentence. The armed services will not accept a young person under such a sentence.
- b. North Carolina is one of a small group of states not extending protection to this age.
 - (1) In only 5 states does protective service stop at 16th birthday.
 - (2) Only 12 stop at 17.

(3) Some go as high as 21.

2. Enactment of legislation providing for the establishment in North Carolina of a system of family courts, state-administered and financed, and operated on a district basis. * The Commission believes that such a system of courts will best serve the legal-social problems of children and families and that the immediate creation of such a court is desirable and sound. This system of courts should be a separate, autonomous division within the court structure at the level of and a part of the Superior Court System of the state. The court would have jurisdiction of all types of cases involving the troubles of families and children and would, to a large degree, substitute diagnosis and therapy for the philosophy of guilt and punishment. The Commission is of the opinion that the operation of such a court system would decrease the number of commitments of children to state correctional institutions and of youthful offenders to the prison system of the state. According to reports which the Commission has received from the Director of the State Prison System, the prison population of North Carolina is now growing percentage-wise faster than the total population of the state and the number of commitments of young people under the age of 18 years is alarmingly large.

a. Present state juvenile court system weak and outmoded.

(1) In 92 of the 100 counties the Clerk of the Superior Court is the judge of the Juvenile Court. This responsibility is extraneous to his regular duties.

(a) Often overworked.

(b) Insufficiently staffed.

(2) Many counties cannot afford specially selected and trained judges and trained personnel because there is not sufficient volume of work in rural and less densely populated areas to justify the expense.

b. Present system does not assure equal protection and services to children in all counties.

c. Many people are being sent to state Correctional Schools who could remain in the county of their residence if adequate resources were available.

3. The philosophy of rehabilitation upon which our state Correctional and Training Institutions were established be re-emphasized and revitalized. In order to implement this objective the Commission makes the following specific recommendations:

a. For the five existing institutions for correction and training there should be

(1) An undergirding basic philosophy for uniform operation of all schools.

(2) Commitment of delinquents to the Board of Correction and Training, rather than to specific institutions. In this Board should be vested authority for the placement of the delinquent in the institution best suited to his needs.

(3) Provision for increased number of professionally trained personnel.

(a) At least one trained social worker at each school.

(b) A "Traveling Mental Health Clinic," to work from the Commissioner's office with all five schools and consisting of a minimum of

(1a) One psychiatrist.

(2a) Two psychologists.

(3a) A supervisor to coordinate the work of the social workers in the schools.

- (c) Sufficient number of "house parents" to provide each cottage with two full-time staff members.
 - (d) A supervisor of religious and moral training.
 - (e) A supervisor of farming operations.
 - (f) A supervisor of education.
 - (g) Adequate secretarial help.
- (4) Adequate budgets for necessary
 - (a) Clothing.
 - (b) Medical work.
 - (c) Dental work.
- (5) Correctional and Training Institutions set up on a graduated rather than a geographical scale.
- (6) Simplified method of transfer from one institution to another.
- b. Provision should be made for the following additional facilities in order to more adequately meet the needs of the present population of the schools.
 - (1) Samaracand.
 - (a) New dormitory space to replace that lost in the one condemned as a fire hazard.
 - (b) Recreation building.
 - (c) More staff housing.
 - (2) East Carolina Training School.
 - (a) More staff housing.
 - (3) Dobb's Farm.
 - (a) Additional dormitory space.
 - (b) Recreation building.
 - (c) Auditorium.
 - (4) Morrison Training School.
 - (a) More dormitory space.
 - (b) More staff housing.
 - (5) Jackson Training School.
 - (a) Adequate school building.
 - (b) Renovation of administration building.
- 4. The early establishment of a center for the care of psychotic children.
 - a. Children with serious mental and emotional disorders cannot receive adequate treatment in a Correctional Institution.
 - b. Such children divert too much time from the primary purpose of the general program.

* In order to show the need for this court system, to determine the number of districts that would be required, the amount of personnel, the approximate cost and other information, the Commission has engaged the services of the National Probation and Parole Association to make a study and survey of the various court systems of the state. It is believed that this survey will reveal the volume and flow of different types of cases handled by the courts. The National Probation and Parole Association is the only national agency exclusively engaged in the field of making surveys and studies of this particular type. No state funds will be used towards the cost of this project. Although the National Probation and Parole Association is a non-profit organization, it has agreed to absorb a portion of the cost of this particular survey since it feels that it will serve as a pilot study which will be of much benefit to other states as well as to North Carolina. A portion of the cost is being furnished by funds from the United States Children's Bureau and the remainder from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

An Advisory Committee has been set up by this Commission to work with the National Probation and Parole Association and to help build the legal framework of a proposed court system. The following have been invited to serve:

The Judicial Council of North Carolina
The Attorney General of North Carolina
The North Carolina State Board of Public Welfare
The Institute of Government
The North Carolina Board of Correction and Training
The University of North Carolina Law School
Duke University Law School
Wake Forest College Law School
The North Carolina Bar Association

Respectfully submitted,

THE GOVERNOR'S YOUTH SERVICE COMMISSION

By /s/ Nat S. Crews
Chairman

/s/ Mrs. Ernest B. Hunter
Member

/s/ Mrs. W. T. Carpenter
Member

/s/ Adam J. Whitley, Jr.
Member

/s/ A. B. Gibson
Member

